The ACCOUNT From WICKHAM

(Lately publiſhed by *John Raunce* and *Charles Harris*) Examin'd, and found Falſe:

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And

Warning thereof given to all ſuch Well-meaning Perſons among the People called *Quakers*,

As through Perſonal Affection, want of Conſideration, or Weakneſs of Judgment have been betrayed, or may be in danger to be betrayed by them, or any other in the ſame dividing Spirit with them, and led aſide from the Way of Truth, into a Separation from the People of God: For whoſe Recovery and Preſervation this is written,

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By *Thomas Ellwood*.

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And a warning thereof given to all ſuch well-meaning Perſons among the People, called *Quakers*, as through Perſonal Affection, want of Conſideration, or Weakneſs of Judgment have been betrayed, or may be in danger to be betrayed by them, or any other in the ſame dividing Spirit with them, and led aſide from the Way of Truth, into a Separation from the People of God: for whoſe Recovery and Preſervation this is written.

FOr your ſakes it is, O ye much pitied Ones, more than for any Weight in the Account it ſelf, or Worth in the Authors of it, that I have thus taken notice of it. For indeed as ſoon as I had peruſed it, I felt a compaſſionate Concern ſpring in my Heart on your behalfs, and a direction in Spirit to open ſome paſſages therein, and relating thereto, to you, that ye might be preſerved from being taken, or, if in any meaſure taken, might be reſcued and delivered from the ſnare which the Enemy of your Souls, and of all Righteouſneſs, hath made uſe of theſe men to ſet, to intangle, entrap and catch you by. And to the true Witneſs of the holy God, in every one of your Conſciences, who retain any honeſt breathing after the Lord, and the way of Holineſs, do I recommend this my undertaking, and the ſincerity of my Intention herein.

To begin therefore with the beginning of their Account, they ſay, *The Differences amongſt Friends in theſe parts, did not ariſe amongſt our ſelves, but were brought in by ſuch, who have largely endeavoured to cauſe Diviſion amongſt us.* Now I affirm, in the preſence and fear of the holy God, and upon my own certain knowledge, that *theſe men themſelves* were the chief Inſtruments of bringing the Differences in amongſt Friends in theſe parts; and They with their Aſſociates, have largely endeavoured, yea, and laboured hard for many Years to cauſe Diviſions amongſt us. The Lord knows this is true, and many of his faithful Servants in theſe parts know this is true; yea, and theſe men themſelves alſo cannot but know this is true, which makes their Condemnation the greater.

They ſay, *It is a Comfort to us, that we can ſay in the preſence of God, we have not been the cauſe thereof* (but then, being conſcious of their own guilt, they add, for a *Salvo*, theſe words) *by bringing into the Church any new Doctrine, or any ſort of unſcriptural Diſcipline.*

Were I now to deal directly with them, I would not grant them that: But since the end of my present writing is for your Information, not to contend with them, that which I shall observe to you is, that were they indeed never so free from bringing into the Church any new Doctrine, or (as they term it) unscriptural Discipline, yet might they notwithstanding, *by other ways and means*, have been the Cause of the Divisions amongst Friends in these parts, as *indeed they were*. They travelled to and fro and traversed the Countries, *gleaning up Stories* and evil Surmises from such as were in the work of Division in other parts; and what they had so picked up, They privately whispered and insinuated into the minds of such simple ones whose Ears were open to them, filling them with fears, doubts and jealousies of an *Apostacy* entring among Friends, &c. whereby they begat in some a Dis-esteem of many antient Friends, and faithful Labourers in Truth's service, preparing and fitting them thereby to joyn with themselves, to oppose, in an ignorant Zeal, the Care and Counsel which, in the openings of Life, the God of Life conveyed, through his Servants, to the Meetings, for preventing that Apostacy which they said was entring. And having espoused the Cause of *J. S.* and *J. W.* who had headed a *Separate Meeting* in the North, they endeavoured to make a Party for them amongst the Friends of this Country, and for that end did bandy together, and having got *J. S.* over to *Wickham*, brought him to our Meetings *to Preach over us*, though he was known to be *out of the Unity of Friends*, and to be one of the *chief Heads* of the Division, to the great grief and heavy burden of many an upright tender hearted Friend.

They add, that they *have only stood for their own and others Liberty in Christ, that all might walk as they had received from him, and not otherwise*. But the Truth of the matter is otherwise. Neither their own nor others Liberty in Christ was infringed, nor were any desired to walk otherwise than as they had received from Christ. *But they stood for a Liberty out of Truth*, out of Christ who is the Truth, for a fleshly Liberty, a self-willed liberty, a corrupt liberty, a liberty to mix in Marriages with such as were not of us. Scandalous Persons were brought to our Meeting upon account of Marriage, and countenanced and abetted by these very men, and such others as they could get to joyn with them, against the mind and life of the Meeting. One Couple especially (whom I forbear to name, being unwilling to mark out particular persons) whereof the Man was not reputed a Quaker, and the Woman charged by her Neighbours with having lain with her own Father to the great scandal of Religion. Yet that Marriage these men promoted, and highly contended for, to the great grief and burden of Friends, whose Life stood against it, and to the great disquieting of the Meeting; *J. R.* alleadging that the Man had been an Absenter from the publick Worship for more then twenty Years, and that though he had not frequented the Quakers Meetings, yet he had not joyned to any other People. And when that gave no satisfaction to Friends, he plainly told us, *It must be passed*; and that there was a necessity for it, otherwise things would be worse: which made it more uneasy to Friends to meddle at all with them. But after long debate, and many Moneths contending about it, having got the Woman to sign a Paper under the notion of condemning her misbehaviour (which Paper was then understood to be drawn up by *C. H.* for her, and was so favourably worded, that it rather seemed to palliate and excuse her Offence, than condemn it, pretending that her Father, when

she

ſhe lay with him, was ſick unto Death, though it was known he was able to walk abroad) they carried on the Marriage with ſuch an high Hand, that the moſt Friends could do to clear themſelves of it, was to declare they did not conſent to it, but only by way of condeſcention, for Peace-ſake, permit it to paſs, and that too with this caution, that they ſhould not take each other in any publick Meeting of Friends, but among their own Relations, that Friends might ſtand clear of them afterwards. To which, though *J. R.* and themſelves agreed, yet were they afterwards brought to a publick Monthly-Meeting of Worſhip, where they took each other in Marriage amongſt Friends, and as Friends, *J. R.* being there to preach on that occaſion. And when ſome Friends being grieved and offended thereat, aroſe and departed in Teſtimony againſt it, *J. R.* in reflection upon them, and to abet the Marriage, publickly ſaid, *Let him that is without Sin caſt the firſt Stone:* And this Couple ſoon after they were married there, went and were *married again by a Prieſt*: Plenty of Inſtances might be given of *corrupt Marriages* promoted and carried on by them over the Heads of Friends. But by this one it may appear what ſort of Liberty they ſtood for, and what it is they call their Liberty in Chriſt. And it is to be obſerved, that the Conteſt between Friends and them about this Couple, was before any Marriage had gone to the Womens Meetings, and was indeed it ſelf the immediate Cauſe that Friends deſired the Womens Meetings might, for the future, be alſo concerned in Inquiring into Peoples clearneſs upon Propoſals of Marriage. By which it may alſo appear how falſe and inſincere theſe Men are, who would lay the riſe and ground of the differences in theſe parts, upon Marriages going to the Womens Meeting. But after that Friends (having been fain to uſe the help of the Womens Meeting to examine that unhandſome Carriage of the fore-mention'd Woman towards her Father) found needful to deſire and adviſe ſuch as afterward came to propoſe Marriage, to lay their intentions firſt before the Womens Meeting, it was truly lamentable to ſee (and hardly credible by any but thoſe that did ſee) what *ſhameleſs* Marriages were obtruded upon the Meeting, and by theſe Men and their Party vigorouſly animated and backt againſt the Meeting, under pretence of Conſcience in not going to the Womens Meeting. The Inſtances whereof, too many to be here inſerted, lie ready for a future Service, as further Occaſion may be given for it. Ah, had theſe Men, and others whom they joyned with, and who joyned with them, ſtood only for their own, and others Liberty in Chriſt, had they walked as they had received from Chriſt, and not otherwiſe, they had not let up that *Spirit of Looſeneſs*, nor made theſe *Rents* and *Diviſions* in the Church of Chriſt, which they have, nor loſt that Savour which once, in ſome meaſure, ſome of them had, to become, as at this day, *unſavory-Salt*.

Next they ſay, *That which hath ſeemed to draw People to pleaſe Men, and to force them to practice things wherein they have not Faith, we have no Fellowſhip with, acknowing God owns it not.* See here on how *ſlight* and *uncertain* a Ground they have laid the Foundation of their *wretched work of Separation*, which they have run, and have drawn others (more ſimple than themſelves) into. That which they have taken ſuch great Offence at, and declare they have no Fellowſhip with, they durſt not ſay did *poſitively draw* people to pleaſe Men, or did *realy force* them to practice things wherein they had not Faith; but they ſay, that which hath **ſeemed** to draw, and to force, *&c.* Had they indeed been any whit tender of the Honour of God, the Proſperity of Truth, the Peace of

the Church of Christ, the Salvation of Souls, could they (think ye) have made so great a bluster, have proclaimed such *open War* as they have done, and set up such open Ensigns of Opposition, and Flags of Defiance, against the Standard of the Lord of Hosts, as their *Separate* Meetings are, upon no sure Ground, no better Bottom, than an Apprehension that something **Seemed** to draw People to please Men, **Seemed** to force them to practice things, *&c*?

So again, in their second Page they say, *We clearly saw, That if their Orders were proposed on such terms, that all were to be rendered of a dark and bad Spirit that did not conform, then*, &c. Here ye see, they cannot say that those things which they call Friends-Orders were proposed on such terms; but **If** they were. Accordingly they say, *they did withstand them that in effect, did so propose them.* They know if they had said they had been proposed *directly* or *positively* on such terms, they should have been immediately convicted of a direct and positive Lye. Therefore they use these *shifting Expressions*, to *hide* themselves and *deceive* you. In like manner they go on there, and say, *We had great cause to be jealous, several things proposed were not from Heaven, but of Man.* So here ye may see, they don't pretend to have had a *certain* Knowledge, a grounded *Assurance* that the things proposed were not from Heaven, but a **Jealousie** only. And consider, I pray, what was this *Jealousie* of their's grounded on? a Foundation, ye will see, sutable to it self and to them. *We had great cause*, say they, to *be Jealous, several things proposed were not from Heaven, but of Man*; *for in their Birth into the Church they* **Seemed** *not to bear the Heavenly Image, neither shake hands with Holy Scriptures.* Here's their **Jealousie**, and the great Cause of it, a **Seeming** not to bear the heavenly Image. But sure it had *beseemed* them to have gone past *Seeming*, beyond *Jealousie*, and to have had a *certain*, sure, indubitable, *positive* Knowledge of what they *Seemed* to be Jealous of, before they had made a certain *positive* Rent, Breach, Division, Separation from the Church of Christ, as they have done. Ah, how hath the Lord abandoned them to *blindness*, who have resisted his Light in the manifestations thereof, that they might discover their own *Nakedness*? The Lord make every one of you wise, to improve these discoveries of their Folly and Falseness, to the advantage of your own Souls, that hereby ye may *see*, and seeing *shun* that *Seducing* Spirit, which hath led them into these *pernicious* ways, and would through their means lead you in after them. And for your further Information and Satisfaction in this matter, I (who, I think, may reasonably pretend to know as much what has been done in the Meetings of this Country, as any other, having seldom been absent from them) do *plainly* and *sincerely* declare, in God's Presence and Fear, that I did never hear or know any of those things which they call Friends-Orders, proposed on such terms as they suggest, as that all were to be rendered of a dark and bad Spirit, that did not conform. But I do certainly know, the things they contend against, have been gently and *tenderly* propoſed, and in a Christian Spirit *recommended to the Witness of God* in the Consciences of those, to whom they were proposed; and while there has not appeared a rugged, harsh, *prejudiced mind*, resolved before hand, in a *heady will*, to break the Order, and thwart the Proceeding of the Meeting; but Friends have found any measure of *tenderness* in the Persons concerned, though not come to so clear an understanding as, with satisfaction, to comply with what was proposed, the Meeting has *condescended to their weakness*, not desiring any should act without Sight,

or

or without (muchleſs againſt) Faith. Of which I could give many Inſtances. But thoſe who have been juſtly noted for dark Spirits, have been ſuch as have declared they did not ſee, and yet have ſet themſelves to *oppoſe*, *revile* and *viliſie* that, which themſelves confeſſed they had not a ſight whether it was of God or not.

To what *J. R.* and *C. H.* ſay concerning *Endeavours to bury them alive, and take away their good Name, and deſtroy their Labours and Services for God and his Truth*, little need, I think, be ſaid, plain it is, and too apparent, that their Labour and Service, of latter years, have not been for, but *againſt God and his Truth*. And more their Friends, than they are aware of, have ſome been, who have endeavoured to deſtroy thoſe Labours and Services of theirs, which (unleſs they repent of, and forſake) *will aſſuredly deſtroy them*. But for their being buried alive, I am (and always was) ſo far from deſiring they ſhould be ſo, that I wiſh, at leaſt, they were now capable of being ſo. Ah, what *Savour of Life* can any of you taſte? What *freſh Spring* can any of you find? What *green Leaf* can any of you ſee throughout their whole Account? The Lord give every one of you, who are in any degree Favourers of them, or inclining towards them, *a true Savour of Life in your ſelves*, that ye may forſake the *Tombs*, and and not ſeek the Living among the Dead.

They ſpeak, Page 1. *Of what ſeveral Friends have ſuffered from ſuch who have been contentious for the Form, and have made it the Meaſuring-Line*; And Page 4. they mention *Formality being made the meaſuring-Line of Fellowſhip and Unity*. That any Friends have made the Form the meaſuring-Line, I neither know nor believe, but take it for a *Slander*. But if theſe Men think the Form ought not to be contended for, they are *Ignorant*. If they cannot diſtinguiſh between *Form* and *Formality* they are *Weak*. In every Diſpenſation, Truth hath always appeared in ſome Form, and that Form which God appoints for Truth to appear in, ought to be contended for (if any riſe up to contend againſt it) ſo long as the Diſpenſation continues, to which that Form is adapted. Would theſe Men have *a Religion without Form*? Or would they have *a Form not worth contending for*? Conſider, I intreat you, ye who have been at their Separate Meetings, *Have they no Form*? Do they pretend to none? Are they ſlid back into ſuch a *Chaos* of *Confuſion*, that they are, or would be, as the Earth was, while Darkneſs was upon the face of the Deep, *without Form*? If they have *no Form*, they have *no Order*; and how then is *the God of Order* their God? If they have a Form, but ſuch an one as they think *not worth contending for*, they had as good have none. If they have a Form which they do think worth contending for; nay, if they have contended, *even unto Separation*, that they might *impoſe a Form* of their own invention upon us, how can they, *without the greateſt Injuſtice*, blame us for contending for the Form which, we believe, the *Power of Truth* has led us into? But making the Form the meaſuring-Line, is a Phraſe of their own, not of Friends, by which they endeavour to *cloud* your underſtandings, and *prejudice* your minds againſt Friends. The Spiritual meaſuring-Line is the Spirit of God, by which the Spiritual-minded meaſure Spiritual things. And by this meaſuring-Line, They, that oppoſe the Form of Truth, are certainly known and diſcovered not to be acted and guided by the Power of Truth; And yet the Form is not made the meaſuring Line. Is there not a *Form of ſound Words*, 2. *Tim.* 1. 13? And if any, who profeſs Truth, ſhould not only *depart from* the Form of ſound Words, but ſhould *reject*, *deſpiſe*, *oppoſe*, contend againſt it, would ye not blame, reprove

prove, condemn ſuch perſons? But would ye have it from hence infer'd, that ye make the Form the meaſuring-Line?

They ſay, *When the Womens Meetings were ſet up, the People were told, that was ſet up to keep things ſweet and clean, forgetting the fear of the Lord, which can only effect that work.* Thus they pretend to *exalt* the Fear of the Lord, but it is that they might *debaſe* and deſtroy thoſe means which the Lord hath made uſeful in his Church, for the *ſtirring up of the pure Mind*, and keeping in a *Watchful* ſtate of Subjection to the Lord *in his Fear*, and reclaiming or *calling back to the Fear* of the Lord thoſe, that by the Wiles of the Enemy may at any time be drawn from it, and for the denying and teſtifying againſt ſuch as *harden themſelves* againſt the Lord's Reproof, ſuch as *caſting his Fear behind their Backs*, perſiſt in Evil, and will not be reformed, who by the judgment of Truth, ariſing in the heavenly Power in the Hearts of the Faithful, are to be *ſwept out* of the Family of God, as by the Beſoom of the Lord. And is not that a proper way and means to keep things *ſweet and clean*? Did *Paul*, think ye, *forget the fear of the Lord*; or knew he not, as well as theſe men, the *vertuous Efficacy* of it to keep *ſweet and clean*, when he took ſo great Care and Pains to *watch over* the Churches for that end? When he gave particular direction for *the aged Women to inſtruct and teach the younger*, Tit. 2. 3, 4, 5. Was not the end of this to keep things ſweet and clean? And might not *Hymenæus* or *Alexander*, or ſome other Apoſtate in that day, have cavilled with as much Reaſon as theſe men now do, and have ſaid; the Apoſtle *forgot the Fear of God, which can only effect that work*? But the Children of Light, who abide in the Light, do, in and by the Light, ſee through and over all theſe *empty Cavils*. And in true and tender Pitty, and Chriſtian Compaſſion to your Souls, are theſe things briefly opened unto you; that ye may *ſee*, and ſeeing may *believe*, and believing may be *ſaved* from the ſnare the Enemy hath laid to catch you.

And whereas *J. R.* and *C. H.* complain of ſome crying, *Make no Bargain with that Spirit, and feed it with Judgment*, &c. And of *Sitting with Hats on in the time of their Prayer, as a Teſtimony before all ſorts of People againſt their Spirits*; with much more of like kind, which ye may ſee in pag. 2. of their Account. This I ſay, is *deceitfully* written by them to *beguile* the ſimple, and make the Ignorant believe that theſe Carriages towards them were the *Cauſe* and *Occaſion* of the Differences between Friends and them in theſe parts: for they immediately add, *Now theſe things are repeated, that none may be ſo ignorant as to think we begun theſe Quarrels with our Neighbours and Friends.* Now the God of Heaven knows, and they know in their own Conſciences, that in this they *deal deceitfully*. For the plain and naked Truth is, that theſe things appeared not in any of our Meetings in this Country, not a Hat kept on in the time of their Prayer, nor any *open* ſhew of diſ-union with, or diſlike to their Teſtimony (how much ſo ever ſome of us were then grieved and burdened by them) until they had *firſt joyned themſelves* to the chief *Authors* and *Fomenters* of *Diviſion* and *Separation* in other parts, abetting their Cauſe, eſpouſing their Quarrel, and having made a Party for them amongſt Friends in this Country, brake forth into an *open Oppoſition* to the way and order of Truth, and by their continual *Strife* and *Contention*, had done their endeavours to *break* our Meetings to pieces, and by their unruly and *turbulent* behaviour, had given unqueſtionable proofs, that they were *departed* from the Fellowſhip of the Goſpel of Peace, and of Friends were become Enemies to Truth. And ſurely they had

had no reaſon to expect to be owned by Friends in their Preaching and Praying, after they or their party had publiſhed Friends to the World to be *Apoſtates*, *Innovators*, *Introducers of Popery*, and the like. As for the Papers they mention, adviſing Friends to *make no Bargain with that Spirit*, *and feed it with Judgment*, &c. Thoſe Papers declare what Spirit that was that was not to be bargained with, but fed with Judgment, namely, that which was *gone out of Truth*, and had led into Diviſion and Separation; and if theſe men had not known themſelves *guilty*, and, That they were *joyned to that Spirit*, and to thoſe that by that Spirit were led into Diviſion and Separation in other parts, what need it have troubled them to hear ſuch Papers read amongſt Friends for a warning and caution to Friends to beware that they were not entangled by that Spirit? Why ſhould theſe men have taken offence at the reading of ſuch a Paper, any more than any other Friend in the Meeting where it was read, if they had not then been *in the Strife*, Contention and work of Diviſion, and ſo *felt a ſtroke reach them* in the reading of theſe Papers, that were deſigned as a Caution to all?

Their charging Friends, pag. 2. with *endeavouring to leaven the Minds of convinced People from Houſe to Houſe, to increaſe their Party, and to defame ſuch as were not of it*; is ſo exact a deſcription of *their own Courſes*, that I am perſwaded there are few Families of Friends in this Country but can convict them of it; And I dare appeal to many of you, if ye have not found it ſo your ſelves. Nay, does not *J. R.* ſtill continue to draw ſome Patients of his, to come to ſpeak with him at his ſeparate Meeting-place, that ſo he may engage them, who elſe would not come there, to help increaſe his number? But their charging Friends with *writing*, *approving and printing Books againſt ſeveral whom they call antient Friends by Name*, *wherein* (they ſay) *are ſeveral Falſhoods and Scandals*, is ſo notoriouſly known, and has been ſo openly and unanſwerably proved, to be *the guilt of their own party*, that it argues an extream degree of *hardneſs* and *impudence* in them to mention it. Let them produce, if they can, any one Book to juſtifie their Charge, before *W. R.* writ his *foul Invective* againſt Friends, under the Title of *The Chriſtian Quaker diſtinguiſhed from the Apoſtate and Innovator*, *in five Parts*. Which *infamous piece*, if my Memory fail me not, I have heard *J. R.* ſay remained ſome conſiderable time in his hand before it was printed; ſo that he could not be ignorant of it: Nay, he was a Promoter and Spreader of it, after it came abroad. Judge ye now, how great a piece of *Deceit* it is in them to blame Friends for that, which their own party firſt went into, and neceſſitated Friends to anſwer, in Defence and Vindication of the Truth and themſelves.

After the ſame manner they cry out of *Envious Reflections*, pag. 2. *Baſe Reflections*, *and Helliſh Names*, pag. 3. When as, beſides what they utter by Word of Mouth in their Preaching and Diſcourſing, what Reflection, that is envious and baſe, is not to be found in their printed Books and Pamphlets againſt Friends? How full is that Book of *W. Rogers*, and other Books writ ſince by him, of abuſive Language, bitter Words and *baſe Reflections*! What is there elſe in *Bug's* and *Bullock's* Writings! And for *envious Reflections and Helliſh Names*, what Sheet of Paper ever contained more than thoſe of *Suſan Aldridge*! in forming of which how great an hand theſe very men had, is not unknown to ſome: But if ye look no further than the Account they have now publiſhed, there ye ſhall find they ſay, *When the Womens-Meetings were firſt ſet up*, *many was ſo elevated with it*, *that they ran like* Gehazi, &c. *Gehazi* ye know, was Ser-

vant to the Prophet that cured *Naaman* the *Assyrian* of his Leproſie; and when the Prophet had refuſed to take a Reward from *Naaman* for the Cure, *Gehazi* ran after him in the Prophet's Name, with *Lyes* of his own inventing *in his Mouth*, on purpoſe, and to no other end but to *get Money and Clothes of him*, 2 *Kings* 5. Now for theſe men to ſay of any Friends, that they were ſo elevated with the Womens-Meeting, that they run like *Gehazi*, what *baſer Reflection* could they have caſt! yet here ye ſee they caſt this baſe and envious Reflection upon *many*. What more *foul* as well as *falſe* Slander could they have vented or invented! Yet theſe men, ye ſee, in that very Paper, wherein they have thus baſely reflected on others, are not aſhamed to tax others with envious and baſe Reflections; whoſe *Injuſtice* herein I repreſent to your view, and ſerious conſideration, that ye may weigh, and duly conſider what Spirit it is they were guided by in writing that Account: That ſo ye may not give your ſelves up, through an *affectionate fondneſs*, to an *implicit belief* of what they ſay or write; but may examine and try them by the true meaſuring-Line, the Spirit of Truth, which uncovers their *Deceit*.

They reject Truth's order upon pretence, pag. 2. that *Several things propoſed have not proved a Bleſſing to the Church, in ſuch things they were pretended for*, viz. *to keep things ſweet and clean*. The truly ſenſible Ones, the faithful and honeſt-hearted, know the contrary, notwithſtanding the pains theſe men have taken, by their Oppoſitions, to prevent the Bleſſing, and make things unſavoury and unclean. But, I pray conſider, what hath their *Diſorder* done? how *ſweet* and *clean* have things been kept *amongſt them*? So far has their *Diviſion* and *Separation* been from being a *Bleſſing* to the Church, that it hath proved a *grievous Curſe* to many of them that have run into it; And hath led ſome of them utterly to part from the very profeſſion of Truth, and ſit down again *under the preaching of a Pariſh-Prieſt*? of which Examples might be produced in ſeveral parts. But, not to ſeek Examples far from home, what *ſhattering work* has been among them, ſince their *Seperation* from Truth and Friends, even in their own Meeting at *Wickham*! One that was a *bold Champion* in their Quarrel, a great *Contender* for them againſt Friends and Truth's order, and *went into the Separation with them*, hath ſince turned Papiſt, and gone openly to Maſs. I forbear to name the Perſon, or publiſh (at preſent) the *miſcarriage* which drove him from them, being unwilling to expoſe perſons or things, unleſs neceſſitated thereunto. Another, that had got up to be a *pert Preacher* among them, hath of late *deſerted* both them and his Profeſſion, and is now ſaid to hanker after the Baptiſts. Divers others of their party in that Town are *gone off* from the very Profeſſion of Truth, and are gone to the *Prieſt*, or the *Top-Knot*, or both, as I have been credibly informed. The Lord make theſe Examples *warnings* to you, that ye may not *tempt God*, as ſome have done, and by him be given up to a *reprobate ſenſe*.

They ſtrike alſo at the order of Truth, under the phraſe of *unſcriptural Diſcipline*, page 1. and of *unſcriptural Orders*, page 2. as if they thought, and would have you believe the way and method of acting and managing the Affairs of the Church now, were as *expreſly* ſet down, and plainly to be read in the writings of the new Teſtament, as the Diſcipline of the Church under the Law was, in the writings of the old: not conſidering, or not ſeeming to regard, the Difference between the Diſpenſations of Law and Goſpel; whereof the one was expreſly *limitted to a litteral Preſcript*, the other

other left to the Direction of the *free* and *unlimitted* Spirit of God, which is never abſent from the true Church, and by which the true Church ought to be, and is guided. They ſhould do well to diſtinguiſh between *unſcriptural* and *Anti-Scriptural*, between that which is *contrary* to the Scripture, and that which is *not contrary* to it, though not expreſly and fully ſet down in it: And ye would do well to put them to ſpeak their ſenſe plainly in the caſe. If their meaning be, that the order and Diſcipline of the Church of Chriſt, is expreſly, particularly, invariably and fully *in terms* ſet down in the Scriptures of the New Teſtament, let them aſſert it, and they, or others, ſhall ſoon, by God's aſſiſtance, be made ſenſible of their *Error*. Or, if they will affirm, and undertake to prove, that the order, way, or method of managing the Affairs of the Church of Chriſt, now uſed amongſt Friends, is *contrary* to the Scriptures of Truth, it ſhall not be long before they ſhall be convicted of *Falſhood* and *Slander* therein. In the mean time it will not be a miſs to obſerve, what *Scriptural Orders* they have brought forth, either during their *jangling Contention* with Friends, or ſince their *Separation* from us. They, who ſo tartly twit Others with *unſcriptural Orders*, ſhould (one would think) be very exact in ſquaring their own Orders by the Letter of the Scriptures. How Scriptural their Practices are, in the caſe of Marriage, in their *Separate* Meetings, I refer to your own impartial Obſervations, who have been preſent at any of them. What they have laid down in their late printed Account, and which they ſay they deſired, is, *That the Men and Women might meet together, whilſt we ſate to wait upon God, and alſo whilſt all Marriages were propoſed, and that Men might take care concerning their Sex, and the Women of theirs, againſt the next Meeting; and then, if the Women had any mind to be together, about any other Matters, that they thought they could do beſt by themſelves, they might take their Liberty*, &c. I earneſtly preſs you to conſider, and wiſh ye would as earneſtly preſs them to ſhew where this Order which they propoſe is *expreſt* in the holy Scriptures. Is there any *plain Direction* of ſuch a method there? Is there any *Intimation* there that the Saints ſo practiſed? Have they any, either *Precept* or *Precedent* in the Scriptures of Truth for this Propoſal of that, more then we have for our practice which they reject? They ſay, *It is a Comfort to them that they can ſay in the preſence of God, They have not been the cauſe of Diviſion, by bringing into the Church any ſort of unſcriptural Diſcipline*, and yet in the ſame breath (as it were) they propoſe the bringing in a Diſcipline no whit more Scriptural then that which they oppoſe? O Conſider theſe things, I beſeech you, all ye well-meaning Ones, who have been and are in any meaſure *beguiled* by the fair Speeches and ſmooth Inſinuations of theſe, and ſuch like men. Bring their work to the Light of Chriſt, examin it by the Light, weigh it in the true Ballance, try it by the true *Touch-ſtone*, and take not every thing for Gold that doth a little gliſter.

They add, that they deſired *Our Meetings might conſiſt of qualified choſen Friends, from each particular Meeting, and not be filled up with Youths, and Girls, and Strangers from other Countries, to buſie themſelves, to head and make Parties among us, and then carry Tales form place to place, to increaſe difference.* Surely none, whether, Strangers from other Countries, or others, ſhould *head* and *make Parties* in Meetings, or *carry Tales* from place to place: yet this, I certainly know, was *their practice* in our Meetings, while they continued amongſt us, and by that means *the Difference was much increaſed* in

theſe

theſe Parts. But if they would have Strangers (by which I ſuppoſe they mean Friends) of other Countries *wholly excluded* from our Meetings, I ſay Diſtance of place, or remoteneſs of outward Habitations, ought not to make any ſuch *Diſtinction* among us. None are Strangers to us, to our Meetings, or to the ſervice of Truth in our Meetings, who are not Strangers to that divine Life and Power, but dwell in it, and are ſubject to it, by which we have been gathered to be a people to the Lord, and our Spirits engaged to his ſervice. The Spirit of Chriſt is an univerſal, free, unlimitted Spirit, and both teaches us how to behave our ſelves towards Friends that come from other Countries, to ſit, *in the Unity of the ſame Spirit*, with us in our Meetings, and them how to behave themſelves amongſt us. But I fear theſe men are *no more juſt* in this cavil than in the former. Don't they, think ye, when they go into other Countries, help fill up the Meetings of their own Party? Ask them if they have not ſo done, and buſied themſelves to head and make Parties, and help make Diviſion, where Meetings have not been actually divided. And whether *Strangers from other Countries*, ſuch as are *confederated* with them in their wicked work of *Separation*, come not to their *ſeparate* Meeting in this Country, I appeal to your own obſervation and knowledge, who ſometimes reſort thither. Judge you then of *their Sincerity* in making this Cavil. And as to their other Cavil about *Youths*, and *Girls*, *filling up our Meetings*, if thereby they mean that the Meetings *conſiſt* of ſuch, 'its *falſe*: If they mean not ſo, but only that ſome young ones are ſometimes there preſent, 'tis *idle*. The Meetings, it is well known, conſiſt of the moſt *antient*, *grave*, *weighty Friends*, of either Sex, in the Country. And if any *young* people, or *old* either, that have been little amongſt us at our other Meetings, and whoſe deportment and behaviour hath not anſwered their Profeſſion, have ſtept in, ſuch have been taken out, and deſired to withdraw. But if they except againſt all that are young in Years, meerly becauſe they are young, their exception is to be excepted againſt as not according to Truth; And I queſtion whether they obſerve their own methods in the *ſeparate* Meetings they have ſet up. But if they do not, it is then without queſtion that they urge theſe things, not from a conſcientious tenderneſs, and with a ſincere mind, but as a ground of *Contention* and occaſion of *Quarrel*. So alſo they ſay, they deſired *that our Meetings might conſiſt of qualified choſen Friends, from each particular Meeting*. But I pray now, do their *ſeparate* Meetings conſiſt of ſuch *qualified choſen* perſons. Ye that have been amongſt them, deal *faithfully* with your ſelves, and if ye find them *falſe* in theſe particulars, urging thoſe things in *pretence*, which they do not practice in *reality*, ſuffer not your ſelves to be *deceived* by them. As for our Meetings, they do conſiſt of *qualified* Friends, from each particular Meeting, ſuch as are *choſen* by him who beſt knows their *Qualifications*, God, who *qualifies* them for the ſervice he engages them in, and engages their Spirits in an holy Concern to undertake the work he *qualifies* them for. But is it not ſtrange that theſe men, who ſeem ready to *ſtartle* at the very Name of *Form*, and cry out ſo fearfully againſt *Impoſition*, ſhould on a ſudden ſo far forget themſelves, as thus to *contend for Form* in chooſing the Members of their Meeting, and *impoſe upon all others*, that ſhould not be choſen and qualified as they think fit, *to abſent themſelves from thoſe Meetings?* What Confuſion do theſe Men run into?

Now,

Now, having told us what they desired, they go on to tell us what they have disliked, as that *when Persons have declared, that they could not go to the Womens Meeting with their Marriage, for Conscience sake, several have declared to this effect, That the authority of Judgment concerning such Consciences belong'd to them, and that they had power to judge Spirits and Consciences, and that they had not only power to desire, but to require Marriages before the Womens Meeting, and that they could have no Unity with, neither stand Witness to any Marriage, but what went first to a distinct Womans Meeting, and that such ought not to proceed in Marriage, but wait till the Cloud was over; telling them, it was not Conscience, but Stubbornness and Wilfulness*; and would say, *They knew it by an inward Sence, without any outward Demonstration*. Thus they fill your Ears with *noise*: and endeavour to *prejudice* your minds with *Reports* of what they say others have said, whose Sayings perhaps they may have *mis-reported*, or *perverted* their *meanings* in giving their *own Sence* of others words; for, if ye observe it, they do not say several have declared *these very words* which they have there set down, but this *in Effect*, which depends upon *their Construction* of the words spoken, the true Sence of which too cannot be so clearly understood, without knowing the Occasions and Circumstances of the Discourse; Yet even as these Men have related them, they will not find, upon a due Examination, any great advantage accrue unto their Cause, nor will you, I hope, find cause of Offence, from any of these fore-going Expressions. As for the *authority of judging concerning Conscience*, which I take to be the main thing here they carp at, before it can be rightly understood, with relation to the present Case, the occasion and intention of the Words must be considered. A Couple that profess Truth, lay their Intention of Marriage before a Meeting of Friends. The intent of their doing this is, not *barely* and only that their Intention may be made known, but that the Friends of that Meeting, if no just cause of Obstruction appear, may *own them*, *joyn with* them, *act for* them, and *stand by* them in the carrying on and consummating of their Marriage. Now if this Couple shall refuse to proceed in that Method, for the accomplishing their Marriage, which the Meeting uses on the like Occasions, and shall pretend a Conscientious scruple for such *Refusal*, hath not that Meeting Authority to *inquire* into the Grounds and Reasons of such a pretence, and upon that Inquiry, power also to *judge* of the *Sincerity* or *Insincerity* of such a Pretence or Plea of Conscience, *so far as concerns their own Satisfaction*, in order, *to their owning* or not owning, *acting for* or not acting for, *joyning with* or not joyning with, *standing by* or not standing by such Persons in their present Proceedings? How else shall a Meeting be capable to act with *Judgment* and *Safety*? shall a Meeting of Friends be obliged to acquiesse, and submit to *every bare Plea of Conscience* from others, *contrary to the firm Perswasion* of their own Consciences; and not be allowed a Liberty, Ability, Capacity, Authority to Examine, Try, Judge a Plea of Conscience, whether it be sincere or no, especially *in a Case wherein themselves are to be concerned?* Worse then would the Condition of a Meeting be, than that of a single Person We have been told indeed by some of them, when we have asked, of the Parties refusing, *a reason of their refusing* to let their Proceedings be lookt into by the Womens Meeting, that *we ought not to ask them such Questions*; but that, *when they have declared it to be matter of Conscience to them, we ought to be satisfied with that Answer, without inquiring further.* But this has not answered our Consciences, nor our Understandings. We believed that, *in a Case wherein*

in they desired us to be concerned, we might reasonably desire to be *further satisfied* than so. Their excepting against any Friends, saying, (if any did say) they had *power to judge Spirits*, shews how short they are of the state of the *Spiritual Man*, who, the Apostle testifies, *Judges all things*, 1 *Cor.* 2. 15. Consider, I intreat you, wherefore was the Gift of *Discerning Spirits* given to the Church, as we read it was, 1 *Cor.* 12. 10. If it was not to be used in the Church? And wherefore were the Saints exhorted, 1 *John* 4. 1. *To try the Spirits whether they were of God or no*, if they have not received from God ability to *Try*, and power, upon Tryal, to *Judge*, whether those Spirits are of God or not; at least *so far as relates to their own satisfaction*, in receiving or not receiving, joyning or not joyning with them? If any Friend, being sensible that a Couple was clouded and muddled in their minds (as some have been in our Meeting by the Oppositions and Gain-sayings of these Men and their Party) and thereby made uncapable at present of seeing what the Lord required of them, should advise them not *hastily* to proceed in Marriage, but *wait till the Cloud was over*, what hurt was there in that to any? If it were said to some, that *their Refusal proceeded not from Conscience, but from stubbornness and willfulness*; What then! was that impossible to be true? Or impossible to be known? or, being true, and being known, was it unfit to be spoken? If any knew it by an *inward sence*, they had the better ground to speak it on. And though it is not probable any Friends expresst themselves as these Men have set it down, *viz.* by an inward sence *without any outward Demonstration*; yet I do not believe that to be *impossible*. And if these Men hold otherwise, ye would do well to put them to speak plainly, that you and all may see how far they are *degenerated*. However, this is certain, that in those controverted Cases which came before the Meeting in this Country, during the Disturbances that these Men made there, whatever *inward sence* any Friends had of the *Stubbornness*, *wilfulness*, and *insincere* Pleas of Conscience made by any whom they abbetted, the Lord never suffered us to want *Outward Demonstration* thereof also, sufficient to confirm that inward sence, and convict the Opposers.

They proceed in discovering their Dislike, saying, *Also we have not liked to send Men from the Country to the Yearly-Meeting, to sign Papers against Ministers of the Gospel for Non-Conformity.* For my part, I never knew any sent for that purpose, nor any Papers signed at the Yearly-Meeting against any Ministers of the Gospel for Non-Conformity. These are but false *Insinuations*, by which they endeavour to fill your minds with prejudice against Friends, that thereby *they may bind you* the faster to themselves. But the Lord I hope, will *break their Bands of Iniquity*, and open your Understandings to see and discern between Truth and Falshood, that ye may reject the one, and cleave to the other. Therefore take not their Stories upon trust, but examine and try them. Here, ye see, they suggest as if Friends of the Country were sent to the Yearly-Meeting to sign Papers against Ministers of the Gospel for Non-Conformity. This is false. Those Friends that go from the Countries to the Yearly-Meeting, go, as in the general Love of God, so on the general Service of Truth, to communicate the general state and condition of Friends in the several Counties they go from, and to consider and advise together, in the openings of Life and heavenly Counsel from God, how to be serviceable one to another, and to the whole body, in procuring Liberty Ease & Relief to those Members that are in Sufferings by Persecution,

or

or Labour under Neceſſities and Wants, whether in this Nation or any other; And to be Inſtrumentally helpful to open the way, as the Lord opens their Hearts and Underſtandings thereunto, that Truth may have a free and open paſſage, to be propogated and ſpread in other Nations, either by Books or Preaching, as the Lord ſhall ſtir up the Spirits of his Servants thereunto; whereby *the Body edefies it ſelf in Love.* But theſe Meetings, I know, this ſort of Oppoſers have long diſliked and reproached; nor are they, *in reality*, for any *ſettled* Meetings for Buſineſs, either Monthly, Quarterly, or Yearly, but ſuch as themſelves may direct and govern, Now as for what they ſuggeſt of ſigning Papers againſt Miniſters of the Goſpel for Non-Conformity, as I know of none ſuch ever ſigned there, ſo there having been but one Paper, that I remember, ſigned at the Yearly-Meeting againſt any that pretended to be Miniſters, I ſuppoſe in this Cavil they aim at that. That was a Teſtimony ſigned in the year 1677. againſt *I.S.* and *I.W.* who were *gone from the Unity of Friends*, into a *Separate* Spirit, and had countenanced an open *Separation* in the North, long before. And having been charged by Friends in the North with many things *contrary to the Teſtimony of Truth*, after many Meetings had between Friends and them thereupon, a Meeting was at length by joynt conſent of both Parties, appointed to be held at *Draw-Well* in *York-ſhire*, in the 2*d.* Month 1676. which Meeting laſted four days, and thereupon a full hearing of the Charge againſt them, and their Defence, they were found faulty in the moſt material things laid to their Charge (as by the Narrative of the Proceedings of that Meeting, ſigned by above twenty Friends that were preſent, doth appear) And after a deep Travel of Spirit for them, that they might be brought to a ſence of their Guilt, they ſeemed at length in ſome degree bowed, and produced a Paper, in order to give Satisfaction to Friends, containing a *Condemnaiion of themſelves*, and of that Spirit by which they had been miſ-led. But quickly after (being blaimed, as was ſaid, by ſome of their own Party, and encouraged to perſiſt in their former Oppoſition) *they denyed their own Paper of Condemnation*, uſing Falſhoods and *Equivocations* to avoid the force of it (as with relation to *I.S.* I my ſelf from a perſonal Conferrence which I had with him at *I. R's* Houſe, do certainly know) and their great Agent *W. R.* who not only was one of that Meeting at *Draw-Well*, but was ſaid to have aſſiſted them in drawing up that Paper of Condemnation for them, did afterwards expreſly ſay, *It was but a* Rattle *to pleaſe Children*; which evidenced the *Naughtineſs* of their hearts, and the inſincerity of their dealings, who afterwards concerning their work of Oppoſition, Diviſion and Separation, they were tenderly admoniſhed thereof in an Epiſtle from ſeveral Friends at *London* in the 3*d.* Month 1676. But they rejecting the tender Love of Friends towards them, and hardening themſelves againſt the good advice in that Epiſtle given them, went on in their *dividing Work*, *I.S.* Travelling the Countries, and ſpreading the Diviſion and Separation further. Whereupon Friends felt a neceſſity upon their Spirits at the Yearly-Meeting 1677. (above a year after) to give forth a publick Teſtimony againſt them, and againſt that *dividing Spirit* they were then led by. That all Friends might be warned of them, that no more might be deceived by them, and that the Meeting might be clear in the ſight of God, who had laid that concern weightily upon it. For your ſakes it is, O ye beguiled ones, whom my Soul both pitties and ſeeks, that I have given this ſhort, but plain account of this matter, that ye may have a right underſtanding of things, and not be miſ-led by *miſ-reports* and *miſ-repreſentation* of matters, to the hardening of you againſt the Work of the Lord, and the hurting of your own Souls.

They

They expreſs their Diſlike alſo of *Contentious Books ſent*, as they ſay, *on the Countries Charge*; *And all thoſe contentious Papers that have been ſent abroad to be read in Meetings, teaching People helliſh Names againſt their Brethren, and to ſtir them up to deny the Teſtimony and Prayers of ſuch whom* (ſay they) *we believe the Lord hath gifted for that Service.* But they ſhould be remembred, that it was their own Party began their Contention in Print, and have carried it on as vigorouſly as they could, till the work grew heavy to them; and now theſe two, as two freſh Heads, ſtarting up in the room of the old, begin to *renew the War in Print*. If they diſlike contentious Books and Papers, that teach People *Helliſh* Names, why do they not openly ſhew their diſlike of *W. Rogers* his *contentious Books* and *Papers*? Of *Francis Bugg's contentious Books*? of *Jeffery Bullock's contentious Books*? Of *Suſan Aldridge* her *contentious Papers*, which are ſtuft with ſuch *baſe Reflections* and *helliſh Names*, as ſufficiently manifeſt from whence that Spirit came that gave them forth; Yet theſe (ſo great is their *Partiality* and *Injuſtice*) they can diſpenſe with well enough. Theſe, or ſo many of them as they think ſuitable to their Service, they can *ſecretly* ſcatter and ſpread abroad, and yet (which ſhews the *falſeneſs* of their Spirit) cry out againſt contentious Books and Papers that teach People helliſh Names.

As for being *ſtirred up to deny the Teſtimony and Prayers of ſuch whom theſe men ſay they believe the Lord hath gifted for that Service*; they need not lay that upon any Papers. Certain it is that the holy God, who hates *Hypocriſie*, and loathes *Diſſimulation*, hath by his immediate Power ſtirred up the Spirits of many faithful Friends, in theſe as well as in other parts, to deny the Teſtimony and Prayers of this *Hypocritical Generation*, who to the World have publiſhed Friends to be *Apoſtates*, *Innovators*, *Introducers of Popery*, *Idolaters*, *ſetters up of Images Idol-Prophets*, *a treacherous Company*, *poſſeſt with the Spirit of* Belial, *mercenary Judges*, *ſelf-ſeeking ſlaviſh Drudges led by Satan*, with much more ſuch filthy ſtuff; and yet (for ſome *evil ends* or other) will thruſt into our Meetings, and attempt to offer their *unacceptable* Gifts amongſt us, and be very angry too, if they are not received and owned by us. Hear, O Heavens, and give Ear O Earth! Was the like ever known in any Age or Nation! Can a Parallel be found in the Records of Time, ſince man had a being upon the face of the Earth, that ever any men that had *branded* a People with ſuch *infamous* and *unchriſtianizing* Marks and Names, and had *actually ſeparated* from them, did *mix themſelves* among the ſame People, *to joyn in worſhip* with them, did *bow the Knee* at the Prayers of thoſe whom they had ſo ſtigmatized with the moſt odious Brands, and *force* upon ſuch their own Preaching and Praying, with *envious Reflections* on them, if they not comply with, and bow thereto! yet thus hath this party dealt with Friends. They have openly *branded* them with the moſt *infamous* Marks, Characters and Names. They have perſiſted in the defence thereof, and rather than acknowledge any Evil they had done therein, they have choſen to rend off and *ſeparate* from us, thereby making themſelves a diſtinct People from us, as one of their own party (a *ſmall*, but *buſie Agent* in the work of *Diviſion and ſeparation* in theſe parts) ſaid openly at a Conference between Friends and them in *Wickham* ſome Years ago (in my hearing, *J. R.* and *C. H.* being preſent) that *They and We are really two diſtinct People, as* London *and* York *are two diſtinct Cities*. All which notwithſtanding, theſe men would fain be Preaching and Praying among us, would fain have us receive their Peaching, and *ſtoop to their Prayers*; And they themſelves *bow* to, and

and ſeem in outward appearance to *own* and *joyn with* the Prayers of thoſe, whom they have thus expoſed, *reviled* and vilified, and *ſeparated* from. O horrible Hypocriſie!

They add yet one diſlike more, which is of *ſuch Preachers that inſtead of Preaching the Goſpel, ſpend* (they ſay) *moſt of their time in baſe Reflections*, &c. This is ſo notoriouſly known in theſe parts to be their own practice, that I am perſwaded there are few, if any, that have frequently heard them, but know this to be *their own Guilt*.

Theſe are the Reaſons they have thought fit to publiſh, for which (with many more not publiſhed, (for they love Reſerves) and would willingly be thought to have more behind) they ſay, *Many Friends* (meaning themſelves and ſeperate Party) *have rather choſen to meet apart, whereby they might peaceably enjoy the true end of their Meetings*, &c. So that their *meeting apart*, as they term it, is here declared by themſelves to be *their own Choice*. They do not ſay, God hath drawn them to it, nor that Friends have driven them to it: but that *they* themſelves *have* **Choſen** *it*; which is an Obſervation fit to be conſidered by all thoſe, who, though favourably Opinioned concerning them, are not baptized into the ſame Spirit of *prejudice* and *hardneſs* with them. They have choſen to *meet apart*; which is a quaint Phraſe they have alſo choſen to cover their Separation. O that they could come to *mourn apart* alſo, over him whom they have pierced by that and other *ungodly* Practices! But though they have thus *choſen to meet apart*, that they *might* (as they pretend) *peacebly enjoy the end of their Meetings*; and, as in their 8th page is expreſt, *have withdrawn to ſuch places, where they might be at quiet, to enjoy the liberty of their Conſciences*; yet, ſo reſtleſs is their Envy, that they will not let theſe whom they have thus parted and *withdrawn from*, be *at quiet* to enjoy the liberty of their Conſciences, and enjoy peacebly the end of their Meetings: but ever and anon they reſort to their Meetings, whom they ſay they have *withdrawn* and *parted* from, to make Diſturbances, and ſtir up Contention and Strife there. They pretend they *withdrew* from our Meetings, and *choſe to meet apart*, becauſe they could not have their liberty to Preach and Pray among us, without being denyed and teſtified againſt. And yet now that they are *withdrawn*, and have ſet up Meetings *apart*, as they ſay, according to *their own Choice*, they will not yet *be quiet*, nor *let others be quiet* neither; but ſo natural is Strife and Contention to them, for all their feigned pretences to Peace, that not ſatisfied with *their own Choice*, they ſtill thruſt into our Meetings, which they have *withdrawn* and *parted* from, and will force and *impoſe* upon us their Preaching and Praying, which by experience they know we cannot receive; as if they did it on purpoſe to *provoke*, and draw forth a Teſtimony againſt them, which might cauſe ſome diſturbance in our Meetings, which they might improve to the advantage of their Party. Judge now, O every impartial Soul, whether their thus doing can proceed from a *Chriſtian* and *peaceable Spirit*, which they ſo much pretend to? or whether this Practice of theirs doth not plainly ſpeak, that they are *not really*, and indeed *Lovers of Peace*, but ſeekers of occaſions of Strife and Contention; not willing to let others enjoy that quiet, which themſelves pretend they ſeperated for.

Having opened, I think, the moſt, or moſt material Paſſages, which in their Account they aſſign for the Grounds of their Offence, and *Reaſons of their Separation*, and thereby anſwered the End of my preſent Undertaking, which was to undeceive you, by expoſing their *Falſneſs* and *Folly* to your views, that none of you may be further *betrayed by them*, for want of ſufficent Information and warning; I

 ſhall

shall not at present take much notice of the remaining Fragments of their Pamphle as perhaps, but for your sakes, I had not now concern'd my self with it at a What they talk of their desire, *that all that is amiss might be forgiven, removed a buried* while they omit the inseparable *Condition* of Forgiveness, viz. **Confessin** and **Forsaking**, shews rather their *want* of Forgiveness, than their *desire* of it or *fitness* for it. And when they say, they are *as ready to forgive as to be forgiven* is a sign they are conscious that themselves are *guilty of those Ungodly Reproachin* they mention just before, and would fain perswade the *Innocent* to make them selves *guilty* too, that, without further reckoning, they might *discount* one wit another. But the work is weightier then they are aware of. And they ar gone far inded from a right sense, if they do not understand, that **Who go out by Transgression, must come in by Judgment.** If they are sensible tha *need Forgiveness* from others, they ought to seek it in the right way and proper course, whether those others, who they think need forgiveness from them, are sensible of any such need on their parts, and desire it, or not. For if they apprehend others fall short of doing their duty, that will not justifie, nor excuse thei men from falling short of doing theirs. Now as the right way of *seeking Forgiveness* is a *true Repentance* of the *Evils* desired to be *forgiven*: so the proper *Evidences* of the Truth of such a *Repentance*, are a *free and sincere Acknowledgement* of those Evils, an *hearty* and *godly Sorrow* for them, and an *utter forsaking* of them. And now that these men have thus intimated their desire of *being forgiven*, if they shall not *pursue* these right and proper means thereto; it will thence the more plainly appear to all, that in this, as well as in the rest of their work, *they are void of Sincerity, Truth and Honesty*. But till they, and their Party, have given *Evidence of their Repentance*, they have no reason to expect any other Answer to their *feigned offers of Peace*, than that which, they say, hath been frequently given them, *viz.* That *they are joyned to a wrong Spirit, and no peace is to be made with them, while they remain joyned to that wrong Spirit.* From which as I heartily desire they might be disjoyned; so I certainly know, that whosoever makes Peace with them in that wrong Spirit, and while they continue joyned to it, will certainly *break his peace with God.*

T. E.

In

In the 5th Page of their Account they have printed a Letter, ſent to the ſecond ayres Meeting in London, *on the 13th of the 5th Month 1687. ſigned by* Joſhua Kinch, *&c. requiring an Anſwer by the 26th of that Month. To which an Anſwer was returned from the ſame Meeting on the 25th of the ſame Month. But ſince they had not* Ingenuity *or* Plainneſs *enough, to publiſh the Anſwer together with the Letter, pretending they had no* ſatisfying *Anſwer; the Anſwer it ſelf is herewith now publiſhed, for the ſatisfaction of ſuch as from their* dark Inſinuation, *might think there had been no Anſwer at all given thereto.*

Friends, *John Barnard, Iſaac Hemings, Joſhua Kinch,*

WE have read a Paper ſigned by you, which you directed to this Meeting for an Accommodation & reconciling Differences, preventing ſeparate Meetings, and Re-uniting thoſe to us that are ſeparated from us in the Country, *&c.* And we having well weighed the Contents, and conſidered from whom it comes, viz. from and on behalf of ſuch as have rendered us to the World to be Apoſtatized from the Truth, Innovaters and Setters up of a Lordly Dominion in our own wills over the People of God, Introducers of *Popery*, and but one Step from it, &c. It gives cauſe of Marvel that after making & ſpreading ſuch Charges againſt us, and before you have taken them off again, you ſhould make Propoſitions of a more ſtrict Unity and Correſpondency with us then is at preſent. If you had come forth with an Acknowledgment that we were not ſuch, and had come to unfeigned Repentance, for your falſely charging us to be ſuch, it had appeared Rational. But to deſire reconcilliation with us before this be done by you, ſeems very unreaſonable and unſafe for you and for us. For if we are *defacto* ſuch as you have rendered us, it's not fit for you to declare an Unity with us while ſuch. If we are not ſuch as you have rendred us, its fit you ſhould take off the approby caſt upon us, and acknowledge your juſt Condemnation before we can with ſafety declare Unity with you; and for your ſaying, if the Separation proceeds to be Publick it will lye at our Doors, what do you mean, the Evil of it will lye at our Doors? if ſo it ſeems there is an Evil init, and therefore you ought to avoid it, for provocation to an evil is no excuſe for an evil in the ſight of God, if you think the work be good (as our ſeparation from the World's Worſhips becauſe of Apoſtacy and Innovations was) why then do you ſeem to make terms to evade and prevent it.

As

As to your complaint of Reflections & Exclusions in our publick Meetings, we say when you have condemned all those *Slanderous & abusive Reports* which you have publickly cast upon us in the face of the World, and manifested the Love of God dwelling in your Hearts towards us as Brethren, you shall find us as ready in the same Love to receive you as Brethren without any reflecting upon you for what is past, and be very glad to appear as Sheep of one Sheepfold under our own Shepherd Christ Jesus, for which end we were called.

But while you do retain those Sentiments of us which you have helped to spread and publish against us, it is not possible for you to have a Christian Unity with us; or that Love and Life can freely flow forth, from the one to the other, in the fellowship of the Gospel.

Nor have we reason to Judge that you are sincere in your inclination to such an Unity as in the Truth can be received: For that you seek to impose upon us a subjecting our selves to the Ministry of some Men, who are known to us by good evidence to be men of evil and vitious Practices, whom we could not for that reason receive as Preachers among us.

And there are among us, have had experience how some of you have been so far from Concurring to detect some of those Men, when sufficient evidence hath been produced against them, That you have rather seemed to cover them.

And as we never could admit the pretended Ministry of such among us who lie under those Scandals, so since you seem to have owned this Separation to be an ill thing (which we do readily agree to) and therefore neither can we admit the Authors and Abettors of such Separation from our Friends and Brethren elsewhere, so as to Receive their Testimony here, else we should become partakers of that evil which we justly condemn, and you your selves would appear to avoid.

And we are well satisfied that you cannot justly charge Friends with excluding or preventing any, who have been owned Ministers among us, who are not of the one or other sort above-mentioned; which are the true Reasons why they could not be admitted of, and not because of any meer Nonconformity to any outward orders or Impositions, as is unjustly and untruly affirmed by you.

Signed on behalf of the Second-Dayes Morning Meeting, by

25th of the 5th Month 1687. Richard Richardson

THE END.